

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Courier.*



BILLY FIDD.

NINE-TENTHS OF THE LAW.

CHAPTER XV.—JEZEBEL.

Their purpose is ambition.

—*Raleigh.*

MR. CHAMBERLAIN was not much better satisfied with the result of his interview with Brownlow than the farmer himself. He had not intended to speak of the proposed exchange at pre-

sent, but it had got wind somehow. To do him justice, he would have been contented, as far as he was concerned, to remain at Windy Gorse; and when he found that his wife would not be reconciled to the place, he would have persuaded the squire to build him a house on some other spot, but Mr. Neville would not consent to that; he wanted all the money he could get for other purposes; but he had no objection to let his steward do as he liked—or rather as Mrs. Chamberlain liked—about the Goshen. In

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fact, Mr. Neville and Mrs. Chamberlain might be said to have settled it between themselves, and the steward was not therefore altogether wrong in saying that it was the squire's doing rather than his own. They none of them wished it to be talked about until after the squire had left England. But Mr. Brownlow's plain, straightforward question to the steward had compelled him to come to the point. Even then the unwillingness which the old farmer had shown to believe what he had heard, and the opportunity he had given him of reconsidering the matter during the next few weeks, had shaken his resolution. When Mr. Brownlow offered him his hand in presence of all the company, he could not help feeling ashamed of himself. He had made up his mind for some hard words, and would, if necessary, have quarrelled outright with Mr. Brownlow; that would have made his task comparatively easy. If only Mr. Brownlow had given way to his temper, Chamberlain could have carried matters with a high hand, and would have felt the less compunction. But the "soft answer which turneth away wrath" he knew not how to meet. He felt that he had gained little or nothing so far, and that the business would have to be begun over again before he could look upon the house which he coveted as his own.

With these thoughts he went down to his house like a second Ahab, "heavy and displeased," and his wife, like a second Jezebel, met him on the threshold. Before he reached the narrow door she knew that something had gone wrong, for she heard his voice complaining loudly because the man who was to take his horse did not appear immediately at the garden-gate, while the dog, which did appear, leaping up as usual to welcome him, received a kick for his pains, and slunk away into the yard, yelping, with his tail between his legs. When Mrs. Chamberlain followed her lord into the dining-room he did not speak to her, but flung himself into a chair and took up a newspaper, which he had already seen before leaving home.

"What a horrid draught there is!" he said, presently; "enough to blow one's head off!"

"Yes; it is a very draughty house," his wife replied, "as draughty as any church steeple."

"It's not the fault of the house," he said, sharply; "any house would be draughty if all the doors and windows were left open."

"All the doors! One would think we were living in a mansion to hear you talk. There is only that little narrow one in front and the scullery-door behind, and if there were a dozen doors we could not have them open, nor windows either, so near to the farmyard."

"The farmyard, as you call it, is as clean and sweet as your drawing-room. Out of regard to your prejudices it is never used, as you know."

"It's a farmyard still. I always keep the doors and windows shut on that side of the house."

"That's what makes it so damp; you shut out all the air."

"Except the draughts, I suppose. It is damp, to be sure—very damp; as damp as a well. You would not admit that before. All my dresses are getting quite mouldy. Spilby says if I do not wear them soon they will not be presentable."

"You need not present them then."

"I have no opportunity of doing so—no society, no friends. And it's worse for Eva than for me."

"Does she say so?"

"No; she has no proper feelings on that subject she has no ambition. Spilby says—"

"Bother Spilby! We don't want her to put notions into Eva's head."

"No," said Mrs. Chamberlain, scornfully; "but she may put feathers into her bonnet, I suppose, and feathers are soon spoilt by the damp. It don't much signify, though, for there's no one to see them here, especially now that the squire is gone. He was polite; he did take notice of Eva; he was quite attentive to her. There is no one else here now."

"Stuff and nonsense! he only came here once!"

"I am not so sure of that! You couldn't see, of course; you have no eyes; you don't know anything. Eva met him when she was going to church."

"And he wasn't."

"He looked at her, I can tell you."

"Or at her bonnet?"

"I only wish we had been able to ask him to our house."

"Did Eva wish it?"

"That is not the question. I hope when he comes here again we shall have a decent place to show him into. We shall see then how it will turn out."

"Turn out! What do you mean?"

"You will understand by-and-by, perhaps. What have you done about the Grange?"

"About turning Brownlow out? Nothing."

"Nothing! I thought it would all have been settled by this time. But this is just what I expected. Mr. Neville promised me I should have the Grange—I asked him for it. I told him it was for Eva's sake I wanted it; only for Eva's sake; and he said that for Eva's sake I should have it."

"You will have it sooner or later, I dare say."

"Sooner or later, you dare say? Why cannot we have it at once, I want to know; Mr. Neville-Thornton wishes us to have it—for Eva's sake—and you have only to tell Mr. Brownlow so, and—and to settle it."

"It's an awkward thing meddling with a tenant like Brownlow," said Chamberlain; "and a very unpleasant thing."

"Unpleasant for him, of course," his lady answered.

"And for me too."

"I thought you had considered all that before?" she replied. "I thought it would have been settled with the squire to-day."

"So it was, virtually."

"And with Brownlow, too?"

"I meant to have had it out with Brownlow after the rest were gone away, but he had got to hear of it somehow or other, and made a speech about it after dinner, and got all the others over to his side. I don't know who told him. I suppose you must have been talking about it to your neighbours."

"I have no neighbours, as you know. I never spoke of it to any one except the squire himself; I did just mention to Spilby that—"

"Spilby! I wonder there is not a column about it in the 'County Herald'!"

"I was obliged to tell Spilby; if I had not she would not have stayed in this house a day."

"I am the more sorry that you told her."

"She would have been quite right to leave too."

"Quite right. Perhaps she will go now, as the prospect of having Brownlow's house is uncertain."

"Why should it be uncertain?"

"You have made it so by your gossip. I wish you could have heard what was said to-day about

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Naboth's vineyard, and coveting your neighbour's house, and all that."

"And do you mean to be influenced by 'all that'? Are you going to be talked out of your house and land, which the squire says we are to have—for Eva's sake."

"I wish the squire would settle it, then, for Eva's sake."

"He would make a better settlement than that, no doubt, if he were to marry her."

"I was not thinking of anything so remote. If you are to have the house, I wish he had arranged with the Brownlows before leaving home. It is a very invidious thing for me to do. The squire thinks of nothing but his own ease and comfort. He makes you a promise to escape being bored, and leaves me to fulfil it for the same reason. He does not care two straws who occupies the Grange as long as he gets the rent. If Brownlow makes a bother about giving up his holding, and especially if, as was hinted, the tenants were to get up a memorial in his favour, it is as likely as not the squire would say he might stay where he is, and throw me over."

"And Eva too? Not he."

Mr. Chamberlain made a gesture of impatience, but he knew it would be useless to tell his wife that she was talking nonsense; and she went on.

"The Brownlows must be managed," she said. "We must be prudent; 'wise as serpents.' We have Scripture warrant for that."

How often is the first part of the divine maxim remembered and the latter part of it, "harmless as doves," forgotten! How often the parable of the unjust steward is approved and acted upon, while the lesson it should teach, the application of human prudence and foresight to higher interests and duties, is overlooked! When worldly people quote Scripture we are reminded not only of the wisdom of the serpent but of the serpent himself, and of his using the words, "It is written."

"Yes," Mrs. Chamberlain continued, proud of her own discretion; "we must make it as easy to the Brownlows as possible. This house has been nicely done up, and it is not really a bad house."

"No; only as damp as a well, and as draughty as a church steeple."

"It would be no worse for them than for us. They could have a good stove in the hall."

"So could we."

"I don't like stoves."

"I wish we could have a new house built," said Chamberlain. "The squire might perhaps do it if you were to ask him—for Eva's sake. The Brownlows might then stay where they are."

"That would take a year or two at least, and I don't like new houses."

"What do you like?"

"I like the Grange. I like a house with proper reception-rooms, and one that can be got ready, with a little decoration and so on, within a reasonable time, so that one may see company. Not for my own sake, as you know, but for Eva's. And the squire has promised it me; so if you make any more difficulties I think I had better go and see Mrs. Brownlow myself, and make her understand that it will be better for her to give it up pleasantly than to wait for other measures."

"It's not her house and farm; it's her husband's."

"She can persuade him, I have no doubt; or manage him, at all events."

"H'm," said Chamberlain. "Manage, eh? That's the way with all of 'em, I suppose."

Certainly if Mrs. Brownlow was at all like Mrs. Chamberlain it was not improbable that she would succeed in bringing her husband over to her own way of thinking, or rather of acting. Mr. Chamberlain could not deny that. It was useless to say any more, he argued with himself. If Mrs. Chamberlain had made up her mind to live at the Grange she would manage it somehow. It would be as well, perhaps, to let her manage it. It would relieve him from the trouble and unpleasantness, and avoid scandal among the neighbours. Mr. Brownlow had said that he would not vacate the farm unless he were turned out, and to turn him out would be disagreeable and difficult. His wife might possibly choose a more peaceable departure, and yield to Mrs. Chamberlain's persuasion.

"Well," he said, after turning the matter over in his mind; "if you like to undertake it you can do so. You will perhaps succeed better with Mrs. Brownlow than I should with her husband. You have plenty of tact."

"Leave it to me," she replied. "You are steward, and can, of course, do as you like. We must have that house. I will manage it. Don't trouble yourself. Now let us go to supper."

It was curious that although Mrs. Chamberlain knew the story of Naboth and his vineyard very well, and though her husband had told her only a short time before of Mr. Brownlow's allusion to it, it never occurred to her that she was playing Jezebel's part, nor did she think of Jezebel's punishment.

Jezebel said to Ahab, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth."

Mrs. Chamberlain said to her husband, "You are steward here, and can do what you will. We must have that house. Don't trouble yourself about it; I'll manage it. Now come to supper."

CHAPTER XVI.—LIKE MISTRESS LIKE MAID.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear;
He but perceives what is; while unto me
All that has been is visible and clear.

—Longfellow.

MRS. CHAMBERLAIN lost no time in carrying out her resolution to go and see Mrs. Brownlow, and to make a pleasant arrangement with her, if possible, for an exchange of houses. The day after the rent-day, being a fine frosty morning in January—rents are usually paid in the country not on quarter-days, but half-yearly, and three or four months after they become due—Mrs. Chamberlain set out to walk to the Grange. She did not often go afoot; she fancied she could not walk far, or that it was not ladylike-looking to do so. At Salt-in-the-Marsh she had been content with a pony-carriage, but here she had a waggonette, and the man-of-all-work appeared on state occasions as coachman in a green coat with brass buttons, and a hat with a cockade. A cockade was supposed to be the correct thing, as Mr. Chamberlain had once been in the volunteers, and it gave style to the equipage. To-day, however, waggonette, coachman, and cockade had all been left at home, partly because the man was wanted in the garden, and partly because Mrs. Chamberlain wished to

appear affable and unassuming, on this particular occasion, towards her neighbour.

She did not like to walk alone, however, that would have been hardly correct; and she did not wish to take Eva with her: Eva had such strange ideas about coveting, and so on: Eva would have been very much in the way, and might have increased the difficulty of the interview which Mrs. Chamberlain was contemplating: she might even have gone over to the enemy altogether if the proposal which was to be made to Mrs. Brownlow should be rejected or appealed against. No, she could not take Eva; and Eva, it may safely be said, would not willingly have gone with her mother on such an errand if she had invited her.

Mrs. Chamberlain decided, therefore, to take Spilby as the companion of her walk, and they went forth together, the maid taking up a position a little to the rear, near her left elbow—"west and by south," according to the compass, supposing the mistress's nose, while she followed it, to point due north.

"You can keep your eyes open, Spilby," Mrs. Chamberlain said, looking over her left shoulder, "and take notice what the rooms are like if you have an opportunity of seeing them. You will very probably be asked to sit down in the housekeeper's room if there is one: we shall contrive one, at any rate, when we have the house. Take notice of everything you see."

"Yes, ma'am. I do hope there will be a place for me to sit in when we reside in the Grange."

They had gone but a short distance when they observed the tall but stooping form of Billy Fidd leaning over a gate which they had to pass through. It seemed at first as if he meant to forbid their progress, and he would certainly have done so if he had understood their errand. He stood aside, however, as they approached, leaving them to open the gate for themselves, and then slammed it after them with a loud noise, causing Mrs. Chamberlain to quicken her steps in a way which was not "ladylike-looking," if there had been any one of consequence to see her.

He followed them, and with his long strides soon passed them, and then took up a position a little in front of Mrs. Chamberlain, and to her right—east and by north. That position he maintained all the way to the Goshen, muttering to himself incessantly except when he looked over his left shoulder to speak to her, as she had done to Spilby, telling her, again and again, she would have to "turn out, turn out," and he knew how mad she was about it—"mad, mad, mad as an old bulldog."

It was in vain that she quickened her steps; Billy Fidd always kept a little in advance of her. It was in vain that she lagged behind; he accommodated his pace to hers and maintained his position. He was quite harmless, and she need not have taken any notice of him, but he was pleased to observe her distress, and kept on cracking his finger-joints in a way which set Mrs. Chamberlain's teeth on edge, and made Spilby "creep all over."

They were both very glad when they reached the Grange. Mrs. Brownlow was at home, and Mrs. Chamberlain was shown into the parlour, while Spilby, to her disappointment, was invited to take a chair in the entrance, or hall.

"Good morning, Mrs. Brownlow."

"Good morning, Mrs. Chamberlain."

"It's a long way from Windy Gorse to your

house, Mrs. Brownlow; it takes a long while to get here."

"I hope you will find it so," Mrs. Brownlow thought to herself as she handed her visitor a chair.

Mrs. Chamberlain thanked her—not for her thoughts, but for the chair.

"I am not much used to walking," she went on; "but as the day is so fine, and it is all down hill, I thought I would not take the carriage out to-day."

"Much better to walk," Mrs. Brownlow said, "according to my ideas."

Mrs. Chamberlain did not profess to entertain the same class of ideas as Mrs. Brownlow; but she would not contradict her.

"I owe you a call, I think, Mrs. Brownlow," she said, giving her her name every time she addressed her; "I hope you don't mind my coming so early, Mrs. Brownlow?"

The good woman could very well have dispensed with the visit altogether just then, but if it was to be paid, like other debts, it was as well early as late.

"I know you are always so dreadfully busy, Mrs. Brownlow, and I always feel as if it would be such a pity to interrupt you at your household duties, and that is why I have not called sooner. But you will excuse me, I know, Mrs. Brownlow, and this time it is about business that I have called; or partly so, at all events."

Mrs. Brownlow pricked up her ears. She wished her husband had been at home; he was somewhere in the fields, and she offered to send for him; but that was the last thing Mrs. Chamberlain would have desired.

"No," she said, "on no account; it is only what you and I can settle between us, I dare say."

She fixed her eyes upon the hearth. "How bright it looks," she said, being at a loss how to begin her business conversation; "but it's very old-fashioned."

It was a large, open fireplace, with a great expanse of tiles at the sides and back.

"We like it all the better for being old-fashioned," Mrs. Brownlow answered.

Mrs. Chamberlain smiled, as much as to say, There is no accounting for tastes. "You are used to it," she said.

"Yes, Mrs. Chamberlain, we are used to it. My husband was brought up, as I may say, on this hearth, and so were my own children, Michael and Lizzie, and the two little ones that are in heaven. This is where the evenings have always been spent when the day's work was done."

Mrs. Brownlow looked upon the old white tiles, pencilled with brown, and obscured here and there with smoke, in spite of all their efforts to keep them unsullied, and sat for a few moments in silence with her hands in her lap, as if lost in contemplation. The tiles, which were of ancient date, were painted with Scripture subjects, and had often served her as a kind of text-book in teaching her children. Some of them represented in series the history of Joseph, for which she had a particular affection. There was the story of Isaac, scarcely less interesting, and many scenes from the Book of Judges, notably the ass speaking to Baalam and the angel appearing to Gideon. Yes; this was a hearth indeed, the centre of a thousand sacred memories and home traditions. Mrs. Brownlow could not easily break away from it when once she allowed her thoughts to rest upon it.

"They are queer old pictures, ain't they?" Mrs. Chamberlain remarked, observing the direction of Mrs. Brownlow's eyes.

"Queer? oh, just a little quaint, perhaps. I am so fond of them."

"You don't often see such now, though tiles are all the fashion again for fireplaces. They are made, of course, in a very superior manner, with Gothic designs in rich colours, embossed, and very handsome."

"I should not care for them," Mrs. Brownlow answered.

"Well, I suppose sentiment counts for something," Mrs. Chamberlain observed, "else those outlandish-looking things are not suitable for a room of these proportions. I should soon get rid of them if I were here, as I said to Chamberlain the other day."

"Get rid of them?" Mrs. Brownlow said, looking her visitor in the face.

"Yes," Mrs. Chamberlain replied. "Of course, it would make no difference to you, we should not think of doing it while you are in the house, and that is partly what I came about—business, you know; I said business."

Mrs. Brownlow straightened herself in her chair, and looked at her visitor, anxious, but speechless.

"Of course you have heard all about it?" Mrs. Chamberlain continued. "Mr. Neville-Thornton wishes my husband to live a little nearer the Hall, and he thinks it only right and becoming that we should have a better house to live in than the one we now occupy, though that is not a bad house by any means, as you know. So I believe he has arranged with Mr. Brownlow that he is to give up this farm and take another. It is only an exchange, you know—'transplanting,' Mr. Chamberlain calls it—both for you and for us. I hope you won't much mind it?"

"Some trees will bear transplanting, and others will not," Mrs. Brownlow said, as soon as she could command her voice. "We have been here a long while, and the roots have struck very deep—very deep; they cannot be torn up now without great injury. It would not be right to do such a thing, Mrs. Chamberlain—or even to wish it."

"As for being right," the other answered, "the squire is the best judge of that; he may do what he will with his own, I presume."

"I must be plain with you," Mrs. Brownlow said; "I must tell you that I do not believe the squire would care about making such a change. I can't look upon it as his doing so much as yours; he said as much to Mr. Brownlow yesterday in the library at Thickthorn. It rests with Mr. Chamberlain whether we shall have to leave at Michaelmas or not."

"Well," said Mrs. Chamberlain, "if that is your opinion, I can't help it. I am sorry if it will put you about, but it is all settled and arranged, and can't be altered now. The squire is gone abroad, and has left instructions which must be acted upon. We must make up our minds for that."

"You mean to come here, then?"

"Yes; that's settled."

"And where do you propose for us to go?"

"Mr. Chamberlain will do everything in his power for your convenience. Windy Gorse has been very much improved, and is in perfect repair inside and out. It is not so large as this, but you have not a large family, Mrs. Brownlow."

No; she had not a large family now, but Mrs. Chamberlain need not have reminded her of that. Mrs. Chamberlain herself had not a large family, but she wanted a large house nevertheless, and she took with her eyes the measure of the room in which she was sitting, calculating with much satisfaction how many she should be able to "dine" there, and picturing already to herself the house-warming she would have, with some of the better class of people from the neighbourhood, and perhaps even Squire Neville-Thornton himself, as her guests.

"I hope you won't be very angry with me, Mrs. Brownlow," she said, presently; "and I do think you will like Windy Gorse. The land is not quite so good as this, I am told, though I am sure I can see no difference; and Michael, your son, is so clever and scientific, he will soon make up for any defects there may be. He is anxious, I believe, to show what can be done with poor land—at least, not poor, but not first-rate. There's no credit in farming well where you have the best of everything, is there, Mrs. Brownlow? How soon do you think you could make it convenient to—to—to remove?"

"How soon?" said Mrs. Brownlow, bridling up. "Yes; not to hurry yourself, of course, Mrs. Brownlow."

"Of course not; I don't intend to. We have not had notice to quit yet, Mrs. Chamberlain."

"Oh! you mean—not the formal notice, Mrs. Brownlow?"

"Of course I do, Mrs. Chamberlain."

"I thought we might have arranged it in a friendly way, Mrs. Brownlow."

"There is nothing friendly about it, Mrs. Chamberlain. Your husband had better settle his affairs with my husband. You and I are nobodies."

"Speak for yourself, Mrs. Brownlow, if you please."

"Then since you wish it, Mrs. Chamberlain, I will. If Mr. Neville-Thornton chooses to turn us out of his house, after due notice, I suppose he can. But until he does so we shall stay where we are."

"Then you must take the consequences, that's all I can say. Good morning."

Mrs. Brownlow hastened to open the door for her visitor, who was hastening to depart.

Mrs. Chamberlain halted for a moment. An idea had occurred to her.

"Bear in mind," she said, "that if you make difficulties about leaving this house, you may not have any other house to go to. Chamberlain can require you to give up the Grange, but he is not obliged to give you Windy Gorse or any other place instead of it. You will find it best to be accommodating."

Mrs. Brownlow made no answer, except a bow and a gesture with the hand towards the door.

Spilby was not in the hall, but their attention was attracted now by voices upstairs; Spilby and one of Mrs. Brownlow's servants were in hot altercation.

"You have no business up here," said the latter; "you have no right to come peeping into the rooms in this way."

Spilby was answering in angry tones.

"Do you think I came here to steal something?" she said.

"Maybe you did," was the reply. "I don't know what else you came up for. Go down directly. This is not your house."

"No; but it will soon be," Spilby said. Then, hearing her mistress's voice, she descended in a flutter of indignation.

"I only wanted to see what sort of rooms there was for anybody to sit in," she said. "There was no harm in just taking a look round. Mrs. Chamberlain said as much herself. I never was so insulted in my life."

Mrs. Brownlow stood in the hall, and Mrs. Brownlow's servant on the stairs, and others around, having been attracted by the sound of angry voices, watching Mrs. Chamberlain and Spilby as they departed, ashamed and mortified.

"Lock the door," said Mrs. Brownlow, the moment they were gone; and Mrs. Chamberlain must have heard the bolt shot behind them. Then she returned to her parlour and sat down.

"I am afraid I have done wrong," said this meek little woman to herself. "I lost my temper; but I *couldn't* help it. If they had stayed another moment I should have ordered them out of the house and slammed the door against them. I lost my temper; it was very wrong of me. But they shall never come to this house if I can help it anyhow. I will be carried out of it by main force before I will give it up to such people!"

BIBLE LESSONS FOR EVERY-DAY LIFE.

BY THE REV. HARRY JONES, M.A., RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S-IN-THE-EAST.

VANITY.

"There be many things that increase vanity."—*Eccles. vi. 11.*

LET us first realise what we mean by vanity. It is not the same as pride. We have the phrase, "proper pride," but no one would think of using the term "proper vanity." There is a very legitimate sense in which we may talk of being proud. A man may be proud of his country, his father and mother, or his children. We are proud of our great men, our heroes, our chiefs in literature and science and art. But we could hardly, without a sense of doing violence to language, speak of being "vain" of them. For vanity means emptiness, or display which is unreal. Proper pride involves something done, something permanently possessed. Vanity, on the other hand, suggests a mere showing off, a claiming something which is not supported by facts, or which has a transitory foundation. Thus, though a man may, in a sense, be proud of skill, or learning which he has acquired by steady pains, and which promises to last him his life, we speak with more propriety of his being vain of his youth or appearance, for these do not last. They may be real enough at the time, but they soon pass away. Though, for example, we recognise the fact and charm of beauty, the world has its wise remark, "Handsome is that handsome does."

Vanity, then, means emptiness or pretence. This is the sense in which it is used in the Bible. And we cannot see too clearly, or remember too well, what a protest the Bible makes against emptiness or "vain show" when we recall the repeated occasions on which it condemns vanity. There is nothing more alien to the Spirit of God than untruth or pretence.

It is so all round. Nature, as we call it, may disappoint, but it never deceives us. When we talk of being deceived by, say, the weather or a crop, it means that we have been unable to read the signs of the sky, or have been ignorant of or neglected the proper tillage of the soil. And in the moral or spiritual world it is the same. Whatsoever a man soweth that also he reaps, whether corruption or life everlasting. God never deceives; He never promises one thing and then gives another.

In the Old Testament we read that it is deceit which marks the enemy of man. The tempter is more subtle than any beast of the field. And in the New, the spirit which specially marks the growth of the Gospel and the progress of the Christian is the spirit of truth. God is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

It is vanity or pretence (which is one form of untruth) that mostly degrades man, and being profoundly mischievous, brings him into distress and harm. Thus, although in the Bible we, perhaps, associate the word "Vanity" most with emptiness and vexation of spirit, and attach a religious and personal sense to these phases of failure, we cannot but perceive that it has a very wide application. That which is seen to be hurtful in man's deepest relationships with God, bears its evil fruit in political and social respects. It injures us all round.

Let us, then, look at some of the forms of vanity or display, both national and personal, which mark and hurt us as a nation and as individuals.

National. We are proud of our country in many ways. It is, for instance, most remarkable how our tongue is dominant in the earth. Starting west from our little island, and crossing the broad Atlantic, we find English the ruling language of the New World. Sailing south and east, skirting the great continent of Africa, we find, where it has been touched and penetrated, that English now chiefly represents the ruling race. And the significance of this becomes eminently marvellous when we not only look on the map of India and remember that it is governed by men who speak our tongue, but, pausing over the immense continent of Australia, reflect that here also the language of the land is English. Wherever, too, a harbour holds the shipping of commerce, there it will be found. Take the farthest step in the frozen seas of the North, the remotest traffic in the East, the inner regions of uncivilised Africa, and there we find enterprise, travel, exploration, and trade associated with those who speak the English tongue.

This illustrates a fact of which, not without some

reason, we are proud. Considering what a little spot this England of ours is on the map of the world, it is wonderful how widely and how far we have made ourselves heard and felt over the surface of the globe. In one sense, we are proud of this. It is impossible to reject the conviction that such widespread influence involves some special excellence, some dominant power. This, moreover, has lasted a long time, and at present we do not perceive any conspicuous signs of English decline. English credit still stands highest in the exchanges of the world.

The effect of all this, however, has been a sort of national boastfulness with which we are, it must be confessed, widely credited. Or, perhaps, it might better be called a sort of contemptuousness with which the average Briton carries himself towards others. Wherever we are, we are very apt to judge everything by our own standard, and not by its fitness for the places and people we visit. We almost catch ourselves scorning the foreigner in his own country for being un-English. As if he could be expected to be anything else!

We measure his social and domestic customs, his dress, his manners, his food, as well as his political institutions and religious belief, by some familiar English standard, and when we perceive a distinction we assume that it involves an inferiority. Though this is, curiously enough, balanced by a disposition to grumble at and complain of most things of our own when we are at home ourselves, it must be admitted that the average Englishman is distinguished by an often uninquiring, unreasoning mood of contempt for anything unlike what he is accustomed to in England. And yet there are points, perhaps more than we should be disposed to allow, in which an unbiased judge would draw comparisons much to our discredit.

For instance, I suppose that there is no country in the world which exhibits such open and degrading drunkenness as may be seen in the cities of Great Britain. I do not know much of the world myself, but I do know something of the outward appearance presented by the people in the chief places of Europe and America. And in no spot that I have ever visited have I seen such gross open intemperance as in many parts of London. The group of sodden, bedrabbed, unseemly men and women outside too many a public-house is peculiarly English. I have seen nothing like it in extent or offensiveness even in the by-ways of rough western cities in America. Take another British scandal; I mean the presence of harlots in the street. Such open display of immorality is permitted nowhere else—at least, in Europe or the United States. We are grievously behindhand in divers matters of public decency.

Moreover, though we may believe that our form of the Christian faith is radically sound, and that the forms which it exhibits on some parts of the continent of Europe are tainted with superstition, England is sorely behindhand in religious reverence. We might be ashamed by the use which many of our continental neighbours make of their places of worship. Disregard for the ordinances of religion is a disgrace to people who make a boast of the superiority of their religious faith. In general education, too, we are behindhand. That is recognised in the effort lately made to spread it on a wider and more national system, but the gross ignorance of some in this country in matters of the simplest elementary knowledge would, I fear, deeply

shame us if there could be such a thing as a competitive examination of the people of England and those in divers other parts of the world.

I do not so much believe in the foundation for the charge involved in the very name "Perfidious Albion" which is brought against us by the rest of the world, for, as I have said, English credit stands highest in the exchanges of mankind, and the honour and honesty of our courts of law and legislature—no mean test—is sound. We may blunder, and some of our processes may be cumbrous, circumlocutory, and tiresome, but English judges and ministers are above bribery and peculation.

There are, however, enough blots in our national character to check and correct much of our national pride.

Talking of display, we display a great deal that we ought to be ashamed of, and, taking vanity to mean emptiness, we are not without risk of having it thrown in our teeth, as, in some very appreciable manner, a national defect. Our national strength and influence is damaged by a sort of bragging humour. England has done great things, but no country can live on its renown; and it is a growing fact that in divers matters in which we have prided ourselves much, other nations are close upon our heels, if they have not in some respects passed us. We are specially proud, for instance, of our machinery, but no one can have read the account of international exhibitions elsewhere without a shrewd suspicion that we must bestir ourselves if we are to hold the high place we have hitherto filled in the markets of the world.

But though I might draw out several more comparisons full of warning to English self-confidence, I must leave this part of our subject. There was a great apostle who once said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." There has been a wonderful levelling up in the world of late years, especially in regard to matters in which we have been accustomed to think that we had pre-eminence. Let us try and see ourselves more plainly as we really are. God has been good to this land. Let us not rest upon past blessings, but remember that His law of dissolution or decay must inevitably be fulfilled in our case just in proportion as we are vain, *i.e.*, pretentious, instead of humbly dependent on Him who giveth all wisdom and strength.

In respect to other forms of vanity, is not that which we call "social" a clear sign of the times? Society is strongly marked by a love of display. It runs through all classes. Many live up to the very edge of their incomes; many live beyond them, not through expenditure for the ordinary necessities or even comforts of life, but from a sheer desire to show off, and cut a finer figure among their friends and acquaintances. It is marvellous to what anxiety and disquiet some people will expose themselves for the sake of being, or being considered to be, more fashionable. They have not the moral courage to resist the temptation to social emulation which presses upon them. They will affect a disdain for the more solid usage of their immediate predecessors, as not fine enough for themselves. They will discard what is useful and sound for the sake of something that is new. The old is not worn out or anything like it. It is as serviceable as ever, but it is too plain, or, as they say, out of date. Somebody else has, say, smarter furniture, and they will not be beaten in the race of smartness. So they waste their money, and pinch themselves in essentials, in order not to be

outdone in elegance, or supposed elegance, which is a poor thing to live on. They buy a thing not because they really want it, but because somebody else has bought it. And, after all, their best satisfaction on this score must be imperfect, since some one else is sure to out-top them in this costly emulation. If they do get a rung higher in the ladder of display, they only whet the appetite for more. Moreover, what is the credit which people get for some little extra exhibition of luxury? The respect of those who profess to admire it is only, at the best, but a poor complimentary thing, and is generally accompanied by remarks behind their backs that such and such a family are making fools of themselves. And if they fall into financial trouble on this score, as some do, their more showy acquaintances, I cannot call them friends, are the first to remark that it was no wonder they were capsize, since they would carry too much social sail. When will more people have the courage to say, "We cannot afford this or that, however fine you would have us be."

There is no end to the mischief done by the sort of thing I am speaking about. Once embarked in the course of display, a family is led into more and more emulation. One thing leads to another, and the longer this chase is continued the harder it is to stop. I honour the man who has courage to pull up, and thus, at the risk of disagreeable comment, to admit that he has been straining his means to fill a place in society that is too big for him. He, however, wins the respect of all whose respect is worth having; whereas the man who struggles on to keep up "appearances" is only laughed at by his neighbours while he struggles, and ignominiously blamed if he sinks. The worst effect of the push to excel in social display is often seen in the affected habits and aims of his family. The vice is catching and demoralising. It sets up a false standard of worth, which is determined not by the house in which a man lives, and the carpet with which it is furnished, but by his integrity, uprightness, and truth. For worst of all, this imitation elegance degrades a man's real character and soul. It puts him out of gear with the kingdom of Heaven, in which pretence can find no place. It taints all his life. It gives him a false estimate of God's world. It creates for him a sort of fictitious world, with deceitful lights, untrue measures, unreal eminence. It leads him astray from the word of God, from its simplicity, honesty, and plainness. It lowers him from being a man into becoming a mere imitator. It impregnates the air he breathes with deceit which chokes the true influence divine.

What I have said about the grievous mischief of social vanity or display applies to that which is more individual. This has many forms, but perhaps it is most often seen in an excessive regard to personal appearance. I am far from saying that we should bestow no regard on personal appearance. Slovenliness is bad, as well as ostentation. We can generally make a shrewd guess of character and habits from appearance.

The apparel oft proclaims the man, and the woman, and it does so, alas! sometimes too accurately. A tawdry smartness is a symptom of a tawdry mind. Foppishness and folly mostly go together, and a woman or girl who obviously strives after display is sure to present an appearance which is not becoming, unless she thinks that her dress will distract attention from herself. Personal beauty, which is God's

gift, is one thing, but no smartness of raiment will create it. If some people could only see how grotesque they make themselves, and how they draw attention to their defects by their superfluous ornamentation, I would do them the credit to believe that they would do better justice to themselves. There is a special charm in fitness. Gaudy clothes only give prominence to personal inferiority. A youthful dress only makes the old look more aged. Do not affect to despise what is really becoming, only let it become, let it suit, and not do outrage to, and caricature, individuality. Try to be real in all things. Appearances must be attended to, but ostentation only destroys comeliness. We cannot really be anything but what we are. Let that be suitably accompanied, and then we shall be, as we should be, in the truest sense of the word, most agreeably equipped. Then we drop vanity, which means emptiness or pretence.

Above all let us recollect what we really are, young and old, pilgrims on a short road that leads into the unseen, where the Judge will ask how the soul is dressed. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. Let the body be seemingly attired, but remember that the Christian vestment is the habit of holiness. This God-given garment is the check and correction to all pretence, all showing off, whether it be in personal appearance or any other form of display.

I have here touched, indeed, on only one—one that is perhaps most general, and one which is certainly most commonplace. But vanity or display has a hundred forms. It breaks out in countless little conceits and petty ostentation. Each of us has his or her weak point in which this disease exhibits itself, or tries to do so. Check its root, stop its early growth, by accepting the reality of the Kingdom of God. Remember that truth, that reality, is its guiding spirit. Remember that God is not mocked—that whatever we are, we appear to Him, that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Single-mindedness, simplicity, sincerity—call it by what name you will—is a chief mark of His way. Sheer display is eminently most undivine. And by yielding to the temptation to it, even in little personal things, we spoil our faith. As the devil gets us to be pretentious and insincere in small matters as well as great, so does he alienate us from God, and shut our eyes to the messages of truth.

Believe it, that though I have been trying to set forth some common-sense advice in much of what I have said, it is based upon religion—based upon the eternal law of God.

As we are Christians, we strive against the temptation to display or vanity, which is one great curse of mankind. And it is only by the use of the Spirit of Christ that we can resist the temptation—the Spirit, that is, of Him who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

He that is faithful in little things, he that tries to be true to himself and his God, in the common relationships of life; he who is sincere, honest, and unpretentious in small affairs, he it is who enters into the joy of his Lord—enjoys His help here, and His peace hereafter. He rests upon the one Foundation upon which the whole body of Christ is built, being true, as he is in communion with Him who is the Truth.

THE TROUBLES OF A CHINAMAN.

BY JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER VI.—THE CENTENARIAN.

THE following morning Kin-Fo, whose imperturbability over the affairs of life remained unaltered, went out quite alone, and with steady step took his way along the right-hand shore of the creek. Having crossed the river by the wooden bridge that connects the English colony with the American, he went direct to a fine-looking house that stood about midway between the mission-church and the American consulate. At the entrance of the house was a large brass plate, inscribed in conspicuous characters with—

THE CENTENARIAN

Fire and Life Insurance Company.

Capital: 20,000,000 dollars.

Chief Agent: William J. Biddulph.

Without pausing Kin-Fo passed through the vestibule, pushed open an inner swing-door, and found himself in an office divided into two compartments by a horizontal balustrade fixed about breast-high. A few boxes, a number of account-books with massive metal clamps, an American safe, two or three tables at which clerks were writing, and an elaborate escritoire with compartments appropriated to William Biddulph himself, made up the furniture of an apartment that seemed rather to belong to a house in the Broadway of New York than to any establishment on the Woo Sung.

William Biddulph was the principal representative in China for an important fire and life insurance company, which had its headquarters at Chicago. The Centenarian

had gained much of its popularity by its attractive title; it had offices and agents in every quar-

ter of the world, and as its statutes were framed on a very liberal and enterprising scale, the business it did was continually extending. Even the Chinese were being gradually induced to adopt the modern system, by which so many of these companies are supported; a large number of their houses were already insured against loss by fire, and life-policies, with their various contingent advantages, were being more and more frequently taken up. The little escutcheon of the Centenarian was perpetually to be seen affixed to the face of buildings in all directions, and was not wanting on the pilasters of the rich yamen where Kin-Fo resided. The subject of fire-insurance had already been duly attended to, so that it could not be that which led Kin-Fo to present himself now at the office and inquire for

William Biddulph.

Mr. Biddulph was within; always, like a photographer, at the service of the public. He was a man of about fifty years of age, with a beard of unmistakably American type; he was scrupulously dressed in black and had a white cravat.

"May I ask," he said, deferentially, "whom I have the honour of addressing?"

"Not altogether a stranger," was the reply; "I am Kin-Fo, of Shang-Hai."

"Ah! yes! certainly! Mr. Kin-Fo, of Shang-Hai, a client of ours; policy No. 27,200. Most happy, sir, I assure you, if I can render you any further service."

"Thank you," answered Kin-Fo, adding, "I should wish to say a word or two with you in private."

"In private, by all means."

Accordingly the client was conducted into an inner room with double doors and hung with massive curtains, where a plot might have been



THE CENTENARIAN INSURANCE COMPANY.

schemed for overthrowing the reigning dynasty without the least fear of being overheard, even by the keenest "tipao." As Kin-Fo understood English and Biddulph equally well understood Chinese, conversation between them was a matter of no difficulty.

Kin-Fo took the seat which was pointed out to him in a rocking-chair close to the gas-stove, and at once opened his business.

"I am desirous of at once making an assurance upon my life in the Centenarian."

"Very happy to assist you, sir; the preliminaries can very soon be settled, and there will be nothing more except that you and I must sign the policy. You are actuated, I presume, by the natural desire to live to an advanced age?"

"Advanced age! what do you mean?" said Kin-Fo, abruptly. "I should have taken it for granted that insuring one's life contemplated the probability of an early death."

"Oh dear no; quite the contrary. To insure in our office, sir, is to take a new lease of life; our clients are bound to live to a hundred. To insure in the Centenarian is the best of guarantees for a man becoming a centenarian himself."

The client looked at the agent to satisfy himself whether he was not joking, but he was as grave as a judge.

Perfectly satisfied with his scrutiny, Kin-Fo proceeded to enter into further particulars.

"I should wish to effect the insurance for two hundred thousand dollars" (£40,000).

Unprecedentedly large as the sum was, the agent exhibited no symptom of surprise, but merely repeated the words "two hundred thousand dollars," and inserted the amount in a memorandum-book.

"The premium for this?" asked Kin-Fo.

Biddulph smiled, and after a moment's hesitation said, "I presume, sir, you are aware that the policy is forfeited and no portion of the premium is recoverable if the person insured should die by the hands of the party in whose favour the insurance is effected?"

"Yes, I am quite aware of that."

"And may I ask," continued Biddulph, "against what class of risks you propose to insure?"

"Oh, against risks of any kind, of course," replied Kin-Fo, promptly.

"Very good," answered Biddulph, deliberately; "we insure against death either by land or by sea; either within or without the limits of the Chinese empire; we even insure against sentences of death by judicial verdict, against death by duelling, or in military service; but, as you may imagine, the premiums in these various risks differ very much, and in some cases are rather high."

"I must be prepared to pay whatever is necessary," said Kin-Fo; "but you have not mentioned another risk which might occur; you have not specified whether the Centenarian insures against suicide."

"Oh, certainly, certainly," said the agent, and he rubbed his hands together with an air of extreme satisfaction; "you have alluded to one of our chief sources of profit; clients who insure against suicide are always those who, of all people in the world, are most tenacious of life; however, as you might imagine, it is one of the cases for which the premium is exceptionally heavy."

"The premium must be no obstacle. I have special reasons for the step I propose to take. I must agree to pay whatever is requisite."

"Very well, sir," answered Biddulph, and began to make some further entry in his note-book.

"If I understand correctly, sir, you wish, then, to insure against drowning, against suicide, against—" "Against everything, against anything!" cried Kin-Fo, with as much energy as his nature would permit.

"Very good," repeated Biddulph.

"Tell me the premium; let me pay," said Kin-Fo.

"Our premiums, my dear sir, are tabulated with mathematical precision; they are the pride and stronghold of the company; they are not, as formerly, based on the tables of Deparcieux."

"I know nothing about Deparcieux," said Kin-Fo, with impatience.

"Indeed," answered Biddulph, with an expression of surprise; "Deparcieux was a remarkable actuary, but antiquated now—in fact, dead. At the time he composed his elaborate tables, which are still in use in most European offices, the average duration of life was lower than it is now. Our present calculations are reckoned on a higher average, of which our clients reap the advantage; they not only live longer, but they pay less."

"May I trouble you to inform me what is the amount of the premium I am to pay?" again asked Kin-Fo, as weary of listening to the praises of the Centenarian as the loquacious agent was desirous of repeating them.

"Before I can tell you the premium, sir, I must take the liberty of inquiring your age."

"Thirty-one," said Kin-Fo.

"Thirty-one," repeated Biddulph; "at the age of thirty-one in any other office the premium would be 2.83 per cent., in the Centenarian it is only 2.72. You see what you gain by coming to us. Let us see; for 200,000 dollars the yearly premium would be 5,440 dollars."

"But that," Kin-Fo observed, "is for ordinary risks."

"Yes," said Biddulph.

"But for *all* risks, for everything, for suicide?" demanded Kin-Fo.

"True," said Biddulph, "that is another consideration."

The agent turned to the last page of the memorandum book that he held in his hand, and consulted a printed list. After a little reflection, he looked up, and in a very gentle and insinuating tone said,

"I hardly think we can do it under twenty-five per cent."

"You mean at the rate of 50,000 dollars a year?" said Kin-Fo.

"Just so," asserted Biddulph.

"And how often must that premium be paid?" inquired the client.

"It may be paid annually in one sum, or it may be paid in monthly instalments, at your choice."

"And what then, do you say, would be the payment for the first two months?"

"For two months in advance, the premium would be 8,333 dollars; paid now, at the end of April, it would expire on the 30th of June."

Kin-Fo took a bundle of paper dollars from his pocket, and was about to pay the amount forthwith.

"Pardon me," said the agent, "there is another little formality to which we must ask you to submit before the policy can be assigned."

"Well, what is that?" asked Kin-Fo.

"You will have to receive a visit from our medical correspondent; he will examine you and report whether you have any organic disease which is likely to shorten your life."

"But what," remonstrated Kin-Fo, "can be the object of that when I am not insuring my life against disease, but against violent death, against suicide?"

Biddulph smiled blandly.

"My dear sir, do you not see that the germs of a disease may already be discerned, which would carry you off in a month or two, and cost us 200,000 dollars right off?"

"Disease would not cost you more than suicide," Kin-Fo insisted.

The agent took his client's hand gently into his own and stroked it slowly, saying,

"Have I not had the pleasure of telling you already that out of the applicants who come to us, none live so long as those who insure against the risk of suicide? And I may take the liberty of adding that we reserve to ourselves a discretionary right of watching all their movements. Besides, what shadow of probability could there be that the wealthy Kin-Fo could ever contemplate self-destruction?"

"As much, perhaps," replied Kin-Fo, "as that he should take the step of insuring his life at all."

"Ah, nothing of the sort," rejoined Biddulph; "insuring in the Centenarian means living to a good old age and nothing less."

Argument, it was evident, was not likely to induce the agent to compromise his opinion. He had next to prosecute his inquiries by asking,

"And in whose favour shall I have the honour of making the reversion of the 200,000 dollars?"

"Just what I want to explain," answered Kin-Fo; "I want 50,000 dollars to be pledged to my faithful friend Wang, and I want the residue, 150,000 dollars, to be the inheritance of Madam La-oo, of Peking."

Biddulph noted all the instructions in his book, and then inquired for Madam La-oo's age.

"Madam La-oo is twenty-one," said Kin-Fo.

"She will be of mature age before she comes in for this windfall," observed Biddulph, with a twinkle in his eye.

"And your friend Wang's age?" he added.

"He is fifty-five."

"Not much chance of the good philosopher handing his legacy at all."

"We shall see," sighed Kin-Fo.

"A man of fifty-five must be a fool to expect to get anything out of you, if you are to live to a hundred."

"Ah, well, Mr. Biddulph, good morning."

The wealthy client was bowed, with all formality, out of the office.

Next day Kin-Fo received the visit of the company's medical adviser. He sent in his report,

"Constitution of iron, muscles of steel, lungs fit for organ-bellows."

No obstacle, therefore, stood in the way of the application being accepted, and in due time the policy was properly signed. La-oo and Wang were, of course, in utter ignorance of the provision thus made for their benefit, and only unforeseen events could reveal the circumstances to their knowledge.

ANTS.

BY THE REV. W. FARREN WHITE, M.A., VICAR OF STONEHOUSE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

III.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ANT'S COLONY.

IN our last paper I endeavoured to describe the worker of the common red ant. I say *worker*, since you should know that, as in the constitution of the beehive, so also in the ant's colony, there are three classes of individuals, distinct in their character and differing in their employments—the workers, the females, and the males.

The *workers*, being neuters or undeveloped females, are those which form the main body of the community, and which usually present themselves to our view on the ant's highways, on the surface of the nest, or in the interior when an entrance has been effected. Their office it is to nurse and educate the young, to build the house, to defend the colony when attacked by enemies, and to forage for provisions. The apterous females, or queens—of which every colony has one at least, but, as a rule, more—differ in colour, appearance, and form from the workers. Among the ants which are now the subject of our observation—viz., the red, often found living in juxtaposition with the yellow—the queen is decidedly larger than any of her subjects. The top part of her head is nearly black, but adorned with silky golden tresses of most brilliant colour, when the sun irradiates them. She, in common with her subjects, is armed with a sting, which, strange to say, is denied to monarchs as well as the workers of many other species, most probably because she is of an adven-

turous disposition, and often takes a constitutional, and requires, therefore, a weapon of defence on any sudden emergency. She is enabled now and then to take an airing, since she is not so tied at home as others, numbering in her family only about a thousand, generally less, and at most under two thousand; whereas queens of some other tribes rejoice in families, at a moderate computation, of from four to five thousand. Some colonies of the stingless *Formica rufa* I have come across, may be set down at ten thousand; and one community of the *Formica umbrata*, closely allied to the common *F. flava*, which I discovered last year in the heart of a large willow it had helped to destroy—a most unusual habitat for this species, which generally constructs its extensive habitation in the ground—I feel sure must have numbered considerably above a myriad.

THE PRINCESSES—THEIR SUMMER MID-AIR DANCES.

Before they leave their mother's roof the princesses are not merely adorned with a dress of scaly flounces, but they are provided with mantillas of the most exquisitely delicate workmanship, in the form of lace-like wings, smoky at their base, which seem to distinguish this from the two closely-allied species. These wings, as they circle in their summer mid-air dances, reflect with glittering brilliancy the many-coloured hues of sunlight; and in the setting sun they scintillate, as the little people swarm and fly

upwards, like sparks from burning embers, which glitter in a midnight sky.

THE HAUNTED TREE.

I have been informed by a late parishioner that there stood in her native village an old tree which was infested with ants, and which the villagers used to say was haunted. They took, I presume, the little people to be elves or fairies of the haunted spot as they darted in and out, and floated hither and thither on their glassy wings. One evening the wondering villagers crowded to their cottage-doors, summoned by the exclamation, "The haunted tree's on fire!" The sun went down, the fire went out, the fairies still survived and looked as beautiful as ever!

THE CHURCH OF ST. MAURICE, COBURG, ON FIRE.

Sometimes, when the ants swarming are seen from below instead of from above, the appearance of curling smoke-wreath, instead of scintillating fire-flash, is presented. "On the 28th of August last," says a correspondent of a London paper, writing in 1866, "smoke was seen to issue from the small spire above the belfry of the handsome church of St. Maurice, in Coburg. The news soon spread that the church-tower was on fire; the fire alarm was given, according to the German fashion, from the church-tower itself, the brigade of volunteer firemen donned their helmets and rushed in all haste from their ordinary vocations to the post of danger, an express messenger was sent to the burgomaster, who was gone to a neighbouring village, and the whole population turned out to see the curl of smoke gradually ascending and disappearing in the clear blue sky. Nor was their anxiety for the old church without cause. Twice before in its history—once in 1807 and again in 1812—had the lightning set this very tower on fire; but whence now could the fire have come? The spot whence the smoke issued was far from any place in the tower ever used or visited; the day was bright and clear, and there had not been and was not any sign of a storm; the heat of the sun, it is true, was excessive, but no one could remember an instance when fire had been kindled by the lord of day. Whilst the spectators eagerly discussed these questions, hundreds of eyes were watching the ascent of the firemen from point to point until they reached the belfry under the spire. A scaffold was then busily constructed, upon which a ladder was raised, and the cause and seat of the fire closely investigated. Sundry motions of the fireman on the ladder on high excited no little mystery below, for he seemed to be engaged in conflict with wasps or other warlike insects. The news soon spread to the earth that the cause of all this commotion was the millions of ants which had settled in countless numbers on the steeple—indeed, all over the upper part of the tower—and as they rose to perform their gyrations in the air, had created the appearance of smoke, which could not be detected as a counterfeit from below. The mysterious motions of the man on the ladder were now explained—they were his attempts to beat off his insectile companions from himself, upon whom they were quite as disposed to settle as upon the steeple itself. I am not," adds the correspondent, "sufficiently acquainted with insect life to be able to speak scientifically as to the genus of the ant that succeeded in so distinguishing itself, but,

having seen several that were brought down from the spire, I am able to say that they were an ant of a reddish colour, slightly larger than our common black ant, and of course furnished with wings."

The genus would doubtless be that of the ant we are examining—*Myrmica*—and it may be also the same species, viz., *scabrinodis*, and if not that, of one or other of its allies, the *ruginodis* or *levinodis*. The numbers may be accounted for by the suggestion which I would throw out—that it was a social conference or political demonstration in the ant-world, and that all the ant cities of one or more of the three tribes mentioned in the neighbourhood of Coburg had furnished numerous delegates or contingents. The cause and issue of the demonstration must to us ever remain a mystery. I may here mention that the little people are all politically enfranchised. Milton calls their constitution a democracy, though I should call it a limited monarchy, a monarchy limited by the will and intelligence of a loyal, a contented, and a united people.

THE SMOKING BEECH-TREE ON THE COTSWOLDS.

I am happy to say that I witnessed, in the year 1876, on the 19th September, a similar phenomenon to that which astonished the Coburg folks. It was on Doverow Hill, over against Stonehouse, I observed a swarm of ants rising and falling over a small beech-tree. The sun was shining brilliantly upon them, and on those also fluttering upon the leaves of the little tree, on which they sparkled like winged diamonds. The effect of those in the air—gyrating and meeting each other in their course, as seen against the deep blue sky—reminded me of the little dodder, with its tiny clustered blossoms and its network of ramifying scarlet threads, over the gorse or heather at Bournemouth. I noticed the swarm about thirty paces off, and it began to assume the appearance of curling smoke; at forty paces you could quite imagine the tree to be on fire. At fifty paces the smoke had nearly vanished into thin air. I captured some, and upon examination they revealed themselves as the male of the *Myrmica levinodis*, which may be distinguished from the female not only from its colour—being tawny brown, with pale, reddish mandibles, antennæ, and articulation of the legs—but because, among other characteristics, it wants the sharp spines upon the metathorax.

THE PRINCESSES AND THE PRINCES OF THE RED TRIBE AND THEIR JEWELS.

But to proceed, I should have you notice that the females of the red tribes possess translucent jewels in the crown of their heads, three in number, of diamond lustre, set in the form of a triangle in their dark red skin, but so small that a lens can alone tell us of their shape and colour. They are not diamond-cut, as are their two many-sided eyes, which are fixed behind each of the antennæ, but are of a spherical form, and are given to them, it has been supposed, to see before them when upon the wing, helping them to keep aloof from birds of prey, and court the smiles of youthful princes who may seek to win their love. The princes of the species *Myrmica scabrinodis* differ but little in general appearance from the princesses. In colour they are blackish-brown, instead of reddish-brown. The mandibles, terminal joints of antennæ, as well as the apex of the femora and tarsi,

are pale reddish; and the number of joints in the flagellum are twelve instead of eleven, as with the females and workers. In size they are very nearly similar to the princesses, possessing, too, like them, the means of traversing the open firmament of heaven; and being also aeronauts they too are furnished, in addition to their lattice windows near their antennæ, with the ocelli, the three jewelled skylights (I have seen them radiant with the colours of the garnet, amethyst, and topaz), through which they keep in view and joyously pursue along the sunbeams their chosen brides. Their married life is, as a rule, short, ceasing as they do to live ere their youthful progeny have come to days of discretion—nay, sometimes before, or soon after the honeymoon has set. We find them also differing from their royal consorts and daughters in being stingless.

THE RED AND YELLOW TRIBES CONTRASTED.

Now let us notice briefly wherein this tribe of reddish emmets we have been describing differs from the representatives of the yellow tribe we captured with it, having found them living under the same roof, though keeping perfectly distinct establishments; wherein, that is to say, *Myrmica scabrinodis* differs from *Formica flava*. First, we notice that the nurse and labourer is, as a rule, nearly twice as large as the average sized yellow worker, the individual workers of this last-named ant differing considerably in length. Secondly, the red is armed with a weapon of defence and offence, while the yellow is stingless. To compensate, however, for this loss—thirdly—the yellow worker possesses what the red has not, the ocelli in the crown of its head, though in the smaller examples they are not discernible; these ocelli assisting it to see where the other cannot, and so avoid occa-

the antennæ of the yellow possess cylindrical joints instead of cup-shaped articulations, and they are devoid of the terminal club. Fifthly, the yellow emmet, instead of being ornamented like its red neighbour with two globular nodes, has merely a single node, which is flattened into a scale. And—lastly—the queen in size is about four times larger

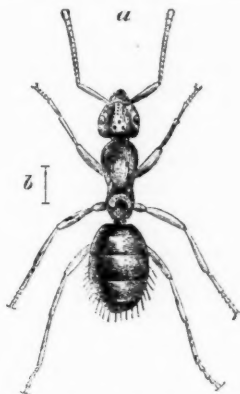


Fig. 7.—*Formica flava*.
Large Worker.



Fig. 8.—*Formica flava*.
Small Worker.

than any of her subjects; her robes of state are more magnificent than the dress of her royal sister, being yellow, inclining to a fine chestnut brown, and carrying a gloss of rich silk-velvet. Her wings are slightly tinted, but decidedly brownish at their base, the costal area or cell in the upper wing being much darker and richer in colour; the tints in the lower wing being less marked.

The wings of the male are much paler, almost colourless, with the exception of the costal area, which is tinted as with pale Indian ink. The body is nearly black, with articulations of legs and tarsi yellowish. It is intermediate in size, between the small and larger worker, and is much smaller than the female; the legs and antennæ are longer in proportion. With reference to these latter it should be noticed that as a rule, as in the case of *Myrmica scabrinodis*, before indicated, the number of joints in the flagellum of the male ant is twelve, while in that of the female and worker it is eleven, so that, including the scape, the antennæ have thirteen joints in the male and twelve in the female and worker.

TWO NATIONALITIES—FORMICIDÆ AND MYRMICIDÆ.

I told you that the red and yellow specimens we captured and have examined are representatives of two tribes of the little people which are now the subject of our observation. I would have you know that they are representatives of two great nationalities in which the ant-world—at least the British ant-world—is almost entirely divided. The *Yellow*, representing the stingless emmet, with one scale or node, and three ocelli; the *Red*, those having their females and workers armed with a sting, possessing a double node, the workers wanting the ocelli. It is curious to notice also that the juveniles, or footless grubs of the stingless single-noded emmets, wrap themselves up in white or pale yellow silken cover-lids, while resting in their crowded nurseries, just before they come out into the busy world to seek their fortune; while the stinging double-noded

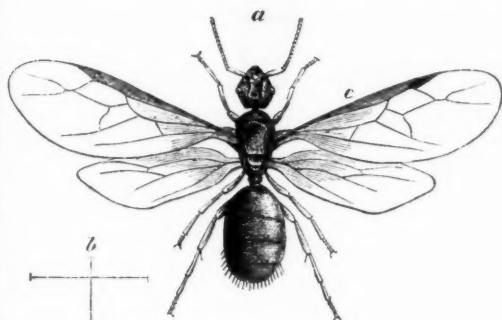


Fig. 5.—*Formica flava*—Female.
a, magnified; b, natural size; c, costal area, or cell.

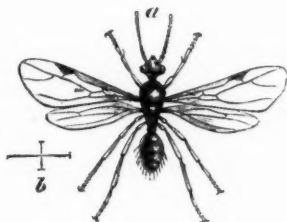


Fig. 6.—*Formica flava*—Male.

sions of offence and threatening danger. Fourthly,

juveniles dispense with what they think perhaps a needless luxury.

Those without stings, with single nodes or scales and three ocelli, and whose larvæ spin for themselves cocoons, are called *Formicidæ*; while those possessing stings, two nodes, and whose workers want ocelli, and whose crystalids are naked, are called *Myrmicidæ*. Of the *Formicidæ*, there are, including the Madeira ant, *Tapinoma Gracilescens*, I found at St. Mary Aldermary Rectory, fourteen species, and of the *Myrmicidæ*, including the Madeira ant *Pheidole levigata* I discovered in the baker's shop in the Borough, seventeen species.

A THIRD NATIONALITY, A CONNECTING LINK BETWEEN THE TWO FORMER—PONERIDÆ.

There is a third nationality or family of the little people, the *Poneridæ* forming a connecting link between the *Formicidæ* and the *Myrmicidæ*; for while they have only one node—which is raised to a level with the first ring of the abdomen, which latter is always more or less constricted—they have their females and workers furnished with stings, and the larvæ spin for themselves cocoons. These are represented by two rare species, the *Ponera contracta* and *Ponera punctatissima*.

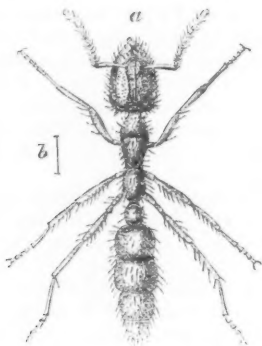


Fig. 9.—*Ponera punctatissima*.

The year before last it was thought that Mr. Charsley, of Oxford, had discovered a new species belonging to this genus; but after comparing it most carefully with the two familiar forms, I last year came to the conclusion that the supposed new species was identical with *punctatissima*; and I satisfied the late Mr. Smith that such was undoubtedly the case. So that the number of species in the three families of the division *Heterogyna*, of the order *Hymenoptera*, including the two Madeira ants, is thirty-three.

These three families embrace the social species—that is, those species of ants living in society, having males, females, and workers.

FOURTH FAMILY—THE SOLITARY ANTS—MUTILLIDÆ.

There is yet a fourth family, the *Mutillidæ*, called the *Solitary Ants*. Of these there are four species recorded in the Entomological Society's Catalogue; three of which I have myself found—*Mutilla Europæa*, and *Mutilla Ephippium*, both at Bournemouth—the *Ephippium*, also at Christchurch, Hants, and in Sandown Bay, Isle of Wight, where it was more abundant. The *Myrmosa melanocephala* I found at Charlton, Kent. The fourth, the rare *Methoca Ichneumonoides*, Mr.

Smith kindly added to my collection the year before last. These solitary ants consist of two sexes, male and female. The males are winged, and the females apterous. There is no third order designated workers, as in the Social species, and with the Bees. The *Mutilla Europæa* has been found in the nest of humble bees. The specimens I have captured are all females, and were running in the sunshine on a sandy or peaty



Fig. 10.—*Mutilla Europæa*—Female.

soil. In 1876, at Bournemouth, when I laid hold of one which was hurrying over a turf bank, it uttered a

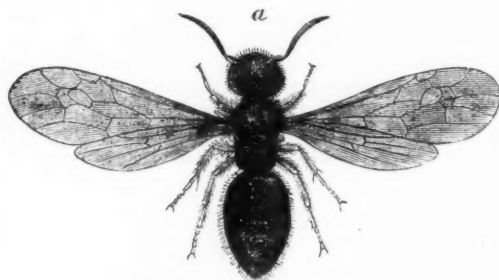


Fig. 11. *Mutilla Europæa*—Male.



Fig. 12.—Natural size of *Mutilla Europæa*—Male.

cry like the strange noise made by the *Sphinx Atropos*, the death's-head hawk-moth, as if it were chiding me in reproachful accents for venturing to deprive it of its liberty. This interesting creature is considerably larger than the ordinary ant, being sometimes quite eight lines in length; it has a black head, reddish-brown thorax, and a black abdomen, banded with beautiful fringes of bright yellow hair. The strange noise I find to be peculiar to this species.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE NUMBER OF SPECIES OF SOCIAL ANTS LIMITED.

With reference to the number of species of social ants, Foreign as well as British, there is much uncertainty. Mr. Smith, in 1858, mentions that he had then recorded 690 species, and he has expressed his conviction that with the actual number

we are probably but slightly acquainted. He adds: "The metropolis of the group undoubtedly lies in the tropics, and when we reflect upon the observation of Mr. Bates, who has collected for some years in Brazil, 'I think the number in the valley of the Amazon alone cannot be less than 400 species,' how limited must our present knowledge of the group be! The imagination is unable even to guess at the probable amount of species."

I myself forwarded three species to the British Museum sent me from West Africa, which were not found in the national collection, and for which there was no recognised designation.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE GENERAL RULE.

I said that the stingless species belonging to the family *Formicidæ* spun cocoons. I should mention that there are exceptions to this general rule. I have found the pupæ of *Formica fusca* and *Formica flava* naked under stones; and in 1876 I noticed, what has not been recorded before, the pupæ of *Formica rufa* without the usual silken envelope, in one of its thatched domiciles at Weybridge.

Other exceptions to my general description of the distinct nationalities of the little people occur. For instance, some of the *Myrmicidæ* are found to spin cocoons; and looking at a species which manifests this instinct, an Australian colonist, through a microscope at the British Museum, I noticed it to possess three prominent ocelli of a topaz colour in a rough and prominent vertex, evidencing thus another exception to the general rule. Some *Myrmicidæ* have been discovered without their weapons of defence and offence. Again, in some *Formicidæ* the ocelli are not discernible, as in the common yellow; they are wanting in the smaller workers, and in the larger workers they are far apart. In another species, again, the little diamond eyes are close together, resembling the trefoil window of a church. As a rule, all ants possess the pair of side eyes formed of many lenses. I have microscopically examined four species of the Brazilian Processionary Ants, in two of which the eye was visible, but very small; in another I could discover none at all, and in the fourth, clad in rich brown velvet tunic and glossy orange skirt, the eyes were visible, but without the usual lattice-work formation. Some ants there are most eccentric in their general appearance, one, I have noticed, carrying on its head what looked exactly like a tea-tray of old fashioned shape. Another I have noticed—a native of Brazil—with grooves chiseled in its head and thorax, that it may stow away its antennæ and legs when anxious to feign death, and so escape the observation of an enemy. I am now preparing for the cabinet an Australian ant of this construction, having a yellow abdomen, and I had the pleasure of seeing the gentleman who sent them to me the other day, and he graphically described how, when the ground near their nest was struck with the palm of the hand, they simultaneously appeared as dead. Another family, or genus, there is, the members of which curve their abdomen over their thorax when upon the march, resembling each a pedestrian with a knapsack on its back. I have quite a colony of an unnamed species of this genus (*crematogaster*) sent me from Sierra Leone, both small and large workers, and also their wonderful habitations, called by the natives, on account of their form and colour, negro-heads.

WOLVES IN RUSSIA.

RUSSIAN wolves have figured so often in sensational story that a few sober facts relating to them may be neither inappropriate nor unseasonable. The information given below is taken from a paper by Professor Brückner, of St. Petersburg, which appeared two or three years ago in the "Russische Revue," one of the ablest of Russian "monthlies," with the object of drawing attention to a pamphlet, then just published in St. Petersburg, by a certain M. Lazarefski, advocating a scheme for the extirpation of these pests.

Wolves, the Professor observes, are found in every part of Russia, in the forests and on the steppes alike, but more abundantly on the steppes than in the woods. Some of these animals attain to a great size. A male wolf, shot by M. Sabanajeff, measured three *arshines*, or nearly seven feet (the *arshin* is 27·7 English inches), from the point of the snout to the tip of the tail; and this size is not by any means uncommon. Wolves live exclusively on flesh. Their number in European Russia is estimated at about 200,000 head; and, it scarcely need be said, the havoc they make every year is immense.

Information collected by the Imperial Statistical Bureau showed that, in the year 1873, the damage so caused in forty-five governments of the empire amounted in value to seven and a half millions of roubles, or about a million and a quarter sterling. The governments which suffered most were those of Samara (655,000 roubles), Vologda (560,000 roubles), Volhynia (448,000 roubles), Viatka (364,000 roubles), Minsk, Orel, etc. (each 250,000 roubles). The smallest sufferers were the governments of Archangel (18,000 roubles), Ekaterinaslov (27,000 roubles), Pultava (32,000 roubles), Olonetz (39,000 roubles), and Kherson (the same). In the Baltic provinces the loss was comparatively small. It is, however, an open question whether the small proportion of loss in many, if not indeed all of these governments, was not due to paucity of live stock rather than scarcity of destroyers, although, of course, the number of the latter must in a measure depend upon the supply of food at command. The losses are believed, too, to be vastly under-estimated. The value of live stock varies immensely in different parts of Russia, and the official estimate is said to have been based on much too low an average per head.

In one district of the government of Perm, it was reported that no damages had been caused by wolves, although it was a well-known fact that over 3,000 head of reindeer belonging to the nomads had been destroyed by wolves in a single night there. In this and in some other instances there was an obvious desire on the part of the peasants to conceal facts.

The destruction is not confined to cattle. In Kazan, it is estimated, 11,000 head of geese are thus carried off every year; and in Kaluga, 2,000 head. Besides large numbers of camels, horses, and ponies, 100,000 dogs are thus destroyed every year by wolves. In taking these figures into account it certainly does not appear an exaggerated estimate that the value of the live stock and domestic animals destroyed by wolves in Russia exceeds fifteen millions of roubles (two millions and a quarter sterling) every year; and if to this be added the frightful destruction of reindeer belonging to the nomad tribes from the same cause, the total becomes enormously increased. To

this, again, must be added the destruction of game and useful wild birds, etc.

Strange to say, the loss of human life appears to be less than might be anticipated. In 1849, 1850, and 1851, an average of one hundred and twenty-five persons, of both sexes and all ages, were killed each year by wolves. In 1875, the number so killed was one hundred and sixty-one. M. Lazarefski adduces this fact as proof that wolves are on the increase in Russia; but Professor Brückner points out that the difficulties in the way of procuring information were much greater twenty-five years ago than at present, and that the earlier estimate is, in all probability, too low.

No systematic efforts have been made to get rid of these pests. Rewards are offered for their destruction, but on a smaller scale than in any other wolf-haunted country, ranging in different governments from half a rouble to three roubles, and in very few cases amounting to five roubles (fifteen shillings) per head. The size of the country and the scarcity of firearms render any attempt to hunt the animals down a sheer impossibility. Local attempts have been made in this direction, but without success. In 1874, at the instance of the Agricultural Society of Vladimir, the troops there in garrison were employed during the winter in waging war against the wolves; and a host of ingenious snares and pitfalls were contrived, but with little or no success. In a few instances, muskets have been supplied to the peasants for a like purpose, the result being a fairish "bag," but no perceptible diminution in the numbers of the foe.

M. Lazarefski, in his pamphlet, advocated an increase of the reward to the uniform rate of ten roubles (thirty shillings) for each wolf killed, and the issue of strychnine ready prepared in pills or cartridge-like cases for placing in the bodies of dead animals as baits. The employment of strychnine for this purpose has, it seems, been legalised in Russia, but its use is opposed by Russian sportsmen, on the ground that its fatal effects are not likely to be confined to the wolves. There appears also to exist, in many quarters, especially among the peasants, a feeling—not wholly unconnected, perhaps, with the superstitions in which the wolf figures so largely in northern folk-lore—that extermination, as distinguished from mere keeping down of the numbers of the wolves, would be an unjustifiable interference with the ways of Providence, which might revert, in some indirect manner, on the heads of the destroyers.

What steps, if any, have been taken during the period which has elapsed since the appearance of Professor Brückner's paper, the writer of these pages has been unable to learn.

Varieties.

A WINTER'S NIGHT ON THE GEMMI.—The following account of a perilous journey shows the hardships to which travellers are exposed who cross the Alps in winter on business, and not for pleasure, like summer tourists. On a Monday morning in December, a number of cattle-drovers from Kandergrund and Frutigen, who had been buying cows and oxen in canton Vaud and had got as far as Leukerbad on their way back, resolved to attempt on the following day the passage of the Gemmi. It was a bold, if not a foolhardy, undertaking; for, though the weather was fine at the time, it was bitterly cold, and there was

no telling what it might be on the mountain. But the beasts were eating their heads off and the drovers were anxious to get home, so, hiring three men from the Valais (each of whom was furnished with a spade) to help them and, in case of need, to cut through any snow-drifts they might encounter, they set out from the baths of Leuk, where they had passed the previous night, at nine o'clock on Tuesday morning. They found the Gemmi almost impassable, so that it was four o'clock in the afternoon when they reached the Tauben lake. Meanwhile one of the Valaisian "road-breakers," less robust or less warmly clad than the others, had succumbed to the cold and exposure. His body was left in the sheepfold near the summit of the pass. Beyond and all round the Tauben lake stretched a dreary waste of snow-drifts, and shortly after nightfall a storm came on; the snow fell so thickly that the cattle could move neither forward nor backward, and all were in imminent danger of perishing. Some of the drovers suggested that in these circumstances they should leave the beasts to their fate and try to save their own lives, for they were overcome with fatigue, and their last crust of bread had been long since eaten, their last drop of schnapps drunk. In the end it was determined to send the two Valaisians to the Schwarzenbach Hospice for food, while the drovers remained with the cattle and tried to tunnel a way through the snow, for shovelling it aside was out of the question. On the way thither the two men lost sight of each other, and one only reached the hospice. The other, who has not since been seen or heard of, was doubtless overwhelmed by the snow and frozen to death. After an absence of four hours the survivor returned to his companions with the food of which they stood in such sore need. They had gone on working at their tunnel all the time—which seemed to them an eternity—as the only means of keeping their blood from freezing in their veins; but the delay of another hour would probably have been fatal to every one of them. After eating they resumed their task with fresh energy, and by eight o'clock in the morning they had succeeded in reaching Schwarzenbach. It was still a hard pull to Kandersteg; but by this time the weather had improved, and they arrived at their homes without further mischance. They were all, however, laid up from the effects of exposure, and their hands, faces, and ears were terribly frost-bitten.

DEATH IN THE STREETS.—The Registrar-General's and police returns of the number of accidents by vehicles in the streets of the metropolis and other towns during the last ten years are as follows: 1869, killed 192, injured 1,703; 1870, killed 198, injured 1,918; 1871, killed 208, injured 2,455; 1872, killed 213, injured 2,677; 1873, killed 217, injured 2,513; 1874, killed 211, injured 2,568; 1875, killed 231, injured 2,704; 1876, killed 217, injured 2,740; 1877, killed 227, injured 2,836; 1878, killed 237, injured 3,961—total killed 2,151, injured 26,075. An association has been formed called "The Society for Preventing Street Accidents and Dangerous Driving," with many noble and distinguished patrons and members. This seems very absurd, when the matter is so obviously in the administration of the police.

FISH TRADE.—A return of the quantity of fish conveyed inland by railway from each of the principal fishing ports of the United Kingdom in the year 1878, shows that from English ports 176,652 tons were dispatched, Grimsby sending the largest quantity from any port, viz., 44,782 tons. From the Scotch ports the quantity sent inland was 32,792 tons, Peterhead furnishing the largest quantity, viz., 2,396 tons. From Irish ports 6,894 tons were conveyed inland, of which 2,264 tons were dispatched from Downpatrick.

COTTAGE MANAGEMENT OF LANDED ESTATES.—In the account of the Board of Agriculture, founded in 1793, it is stated that a gentleman in Gloucestershire, by annexing land to each cottage, reduced the poor's rates in his parish from £200 to £12 a year. Many similar cases having been proved, it was said that "if the Society had performed no other service to the country, it would have amply merited the whole of that pecuniary aid which Parliament has voted for its support." George III was patron of this early Agricultural Society, Sir John Sinclair the founder, and Arthur Young the secretary. But the Great War withdrew the attention of the nation from internal improvements, and after a few years the Agricultural Society collapsed, to be restored in more peaceful times. The cottage land system deserves the notice of the Royal Agricultural Society.

TENANT PEASANTRY OF IRELAND.—It is stated that there are 400,000 tenant-farmers in Ireland, very little removed above the rank of labourers, occupying holdings under thirty acres each.

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The FEBRUARY PART is now ready.

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WITH A COLOURED FRONTISPIECE—

A SNOWSTORM ON OLIVET.

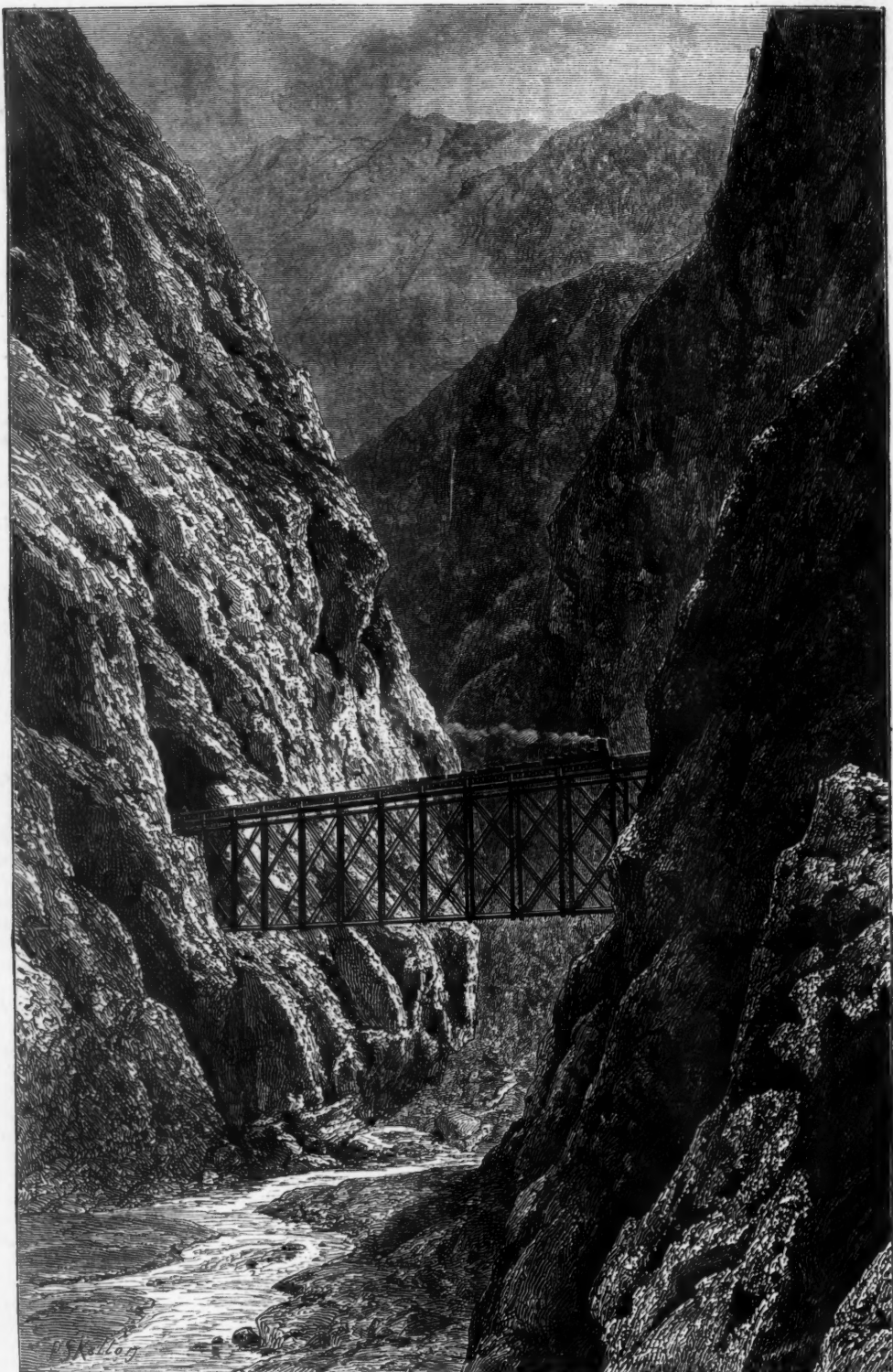
By HENRY A. HARPER.

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OROYA RAILWAY, PERU.

[From a Photograph.]

This railway, which connects the port of Callao on the Pacific with Oroya on the eastern side of the Andes, is the highest railway in the world, reaching at one point an elevation of 17,574 feet, which is higher than Mont Blanc. The Puente del Invernillo, or Devil's Bridge, a characteristic point in the scenery, is near San Mateo.